



Breastfeeding E-News

American Academy of Family Physicians Breastfeeding Position Paper 2014

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recently released an updated position paper on breastfeeding. The last position paper on breastfeeding released by the AAFP was dated 2008. This new paper offers updated comprehensive information and key recommendations. The eight key recommendations are listed below.

1. Almost all babies should be breastfed or receive human milk exclusively for approximately six months. Breastfeeding with appropriate complementary foods, including iron-rich foods, should continue through at least the first year. Health outcomes for mothers and babies are best when breastfeeding continues for at least two years. Breastfeeding should continue as long as mutually desired by mother and child.
2. Medical contraindications to breastfeeding are rare.
3. Birthing centers and hospitals need to incorporate baby-friendly principles. Babies should be kept skin-to-skin with the mother at least until the first successful breastfeed. Perinatal care practices should support breastfeeding, optimally following the “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding”, and mothers and babies should receive care from health care professionals knowledgeable about breastfeeding.
4. Formula supplementation of breastfed babies should occur only when medically indicated. Family physicians should not undermine breastfeeding by providing formula samples or coupons to breastfeeding mothers.
5. Breastfeeding babies and mothers should be seen for follow-up within a few days after birth. Family physicians and all health care professionals who regularly care for mothers and babies should be able to assist with normal breastfeeding and common breastfeeding challenges. When challenges exceed the expertise of the family physician, patients should be referred to someone with a higher level of expertise, such as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.
6. Family physicians should establish a breastfeeding-friendly office, even if they do not provide maternity care. Encouragement from a physician and other family members, especially the baby’s father and maternal grandmother, are important factors in the initiation of breastfeeding. While caring for a mother’s immediate and extended family, a family physician should remind her social support system to encourage breastfeeding.
7. Family physicians should work in their communities to advocate removal of barriers to breastfeeding. This could include overcoming cultural issues, encouraging breastfeeding-friendly workplaces, advocating for adequate paid maternity leave, and protecting the right to breastfeed in public. With all of the health advantages of breastfeeding for mothers and children, as well as its economic and ecological impacts, breastfeeding is a public health issue, not merely a lifestyle choice.
8. Medical schools and family medicine residencies should include appropriate curricula in lactation physiology and breastfeeding management so that family physicians are adequately trained to provide care to breastfeeding mothers and infants. Medical trainees who are breastfeeding should be given support to attain their breastfeeding goals.

The position paper includes excellent references and can be viewed in entirety on the [AAFP website](#).

In the News

Breastfeeding and Inflammation

A study released recently in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* suggests that breastfeeding offers cancer protection through lower chronic inflammation. Young adults who were breastfed for at least three months had lower rates of chronic inflammation compared to those not breastfed. Research suggests that a low-level constant state of inflammation increases the risk of many chronic diseases including some cancers. The study utilized data from almost seven thousand participants in a British study on adolescent health.

TRICARE Breastfeeding Coverage

Thanks to a measure in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed by Congress in December, TRICARE (the Department of Defense health care program) will soon be required to provide breastfeeding supplies and support to new moms. TRICARE serves approximately 9.7 million Active Duty Service members, National Guard and Reserve members, retirees, their families, survivors, and certain former spouses.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

November 20, 2014 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). Partner highlights included:

[World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action statement](#)

[International Lactation Consultant Association statement](#)

Thought for the Day

“Mammals: a family of vertebrate animals whose females in a state of nature suckle their young, but when civilized and enlightened put them out to nurse, or use the bottle.” Ambrose Bierce

